



READING I

Ikea Houses

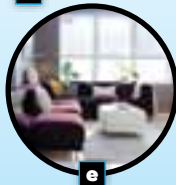
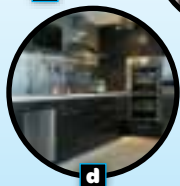
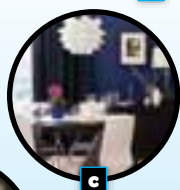
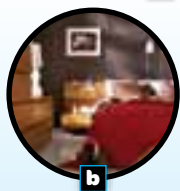
Furniture maker dominates the world of... furniture.

ANSWERS ON PAGE 45

1 Pre-reading

Match the rooms in the house (1 to 5) to the pictures (a-e). What furniture do you have in each room? Discuss your ideas with a partner.

1. Living room ☐
2. Bathroom ☐
3. Kitchen ☐
4. Dining room ☐
5. Bedroom ☐



2 Reading I

Where do you buy your furniture? What are the advantages and disadvantages of the shop where you go? Think. Then, read the article to compare your ideas.

3 Reading II

Read the article again and say what the numbers refer to.

1. 8 million
2. 120,000 people
3. 267
4. £10
5. 25-year

4 Language focus

The Past Simple

Look at this extract from the article on this page, "...This meant I had to go back to the shop,..." The writer has used some Past Simple verbs ("meant / had"). Transform these sentences into negative forms.

1. I went out last night.
2. She spoke to Jeff.
3. They ate at home.
4. He took the train.

5 Discussion

1. Have you ever bought anything from Ikea? What did you think of it?
2. What's your favourite / least favourite piece of furniture? Why?
3. What type of furniture would you love to have? Why?

Have you bought any **furniture** lately? Was it from Ikea? The Swedish furniture **manufacturer** is fast becoming a world leader. But is that a good thing?

There's no doubt that Ikea is popular! Ten per cent of all furniture bought by UK **householders** is from Ikea. More than 8 million homes in the UK have Ikea products. There are 267 shops in 25 countries around the world, with more than 120,000 people employed in the shops. And five hundred million global customers visit a store annually. Trade journal *Marketing* said, "It's a Swedish success story. Almost a third of adults in the UK have bought furniture from Ikea in the past three years!"

There are clear advantages to Ikea furniture. For a start, it's cheap. Sofas are **available** for just over £100. You can get a **bookcase** for as little as £10 (the **chain's** Billy bookcase is one of its most popular items), and you can **pick up** a table with four chairs for less than £150. "They offer simple designs at excellent prices," said an industry expert. "Ikea has meant stylish interior decor is possible on even the smallest of **budgets**."

The products are also strong and **last** well. "I have a couple of **dressing tables**, a desk and a bed from Ikea. They've **survived** wonderfully over the past 5 years," explained one shopper. "I've got a kitchen table and some cupboards with glass doors all from Ikea. They've both **served me well**," said another. Many items come with a guarantee too. With an Ikea kitchen, for example, you get a 25-year warranty!



However, there are some **downsides**.

Assembling the furniture isn't always easy. "I couldn't understand the drawing," said one shopper. "I was **putting** this desk **together** when I realised that one of the pieces was **missing**," said another. "This meant I had to go back to the shop,

which was way **out of town**." Others complain about the

confusing layout of the shops. "I just wanted to buy a plant pot," explained another shopper, "but I had to walk through six different departments to get it. It was like a **maze** in there."



Finally, the fact that everyone buys in Ikea means that a lot of houses have the same furniture. One day, all our homes could **turn into** models of the shop's **showrooms**. But then if the furniture looks good and it lasts well, who cares? ☺



GLOSSARY

furniture

objects for a home/office such as tables, chairs, sofas, desks, etc.

a manufacturer

a company that makes something

a householder

a person who lives in a house

available

if a product is "available", you can buy it because it's in the shops

a bookcase

a large piece of furniture for books

a chain

a large company with lots of shops where they sell their products

to pick up

to buy / find. Literally, to take in your hands

a budget

the amount of money you have to buy something or to spend in general

to last

if something "lasts", it exists for a long time

a dressing table

a piece of furniture with a mirror and drawers (boxes for keeping things).

It is usually kept in the bedroom

to survive

if something "survives", it lasts for a period of time without breaking

served me well

if something "serves you well", it does what you hoped it would do during a period of time

downside

the negative aspect of something

to assemble

to put the parts together to make a finished product

to put together

to construct; to build

missing

if something is "missing", it is not where it should be and you can't find it

out of town

if something is "out of town", it is far from the centre of a town

a maze

if a place is like a "maze" it is very confusing and it is hard to walk around. Literally, a "maze" is a complex system of paths and corridors that is a type of game

— you have to try to get to the centre of it

to turn into

to become

a showroom

a type of shop where a company can exhibit / show its products